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Georgian websites forced offline in 'cyber war'



И КОНЧИТ ОН ТАКЖЕ...

hacked by South Ossetia Hack Crew

The Georgian parliament website, [parliament.ge](#), was wiped and replaced with images comparing the Georgian president to Adolf Hitler.

Asher Moses
August 12, 2008 - 11:58AM

Georgia and security experts have accused Russian state-sponsored hackers of breaking into Georgian government and commercial websites as part of a cyber war to supplement Russia's military operations in South Ossetia.

- **Official websites hacked**
- **'Cyber warfare campaign'**
- **Site moved**

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's official website, as well as the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the central government site and various commercial sites, have all been forced offline over the past week.

The Georgian Parliament website, [parliament.ge](#), has been defaced by the "South Ossetia Hack Crew". The site's content has been replaced with images comparing Saakashvili to Adolf Hitler.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was forced to set up a blog on Google's Blogger service as a [temporary site](#) while it battled to resurrect its official homepage. News site Civil.ge followed its lead, claiming its servers were under permanent attack.

Jart Armin, a researcher who publishes a [blog](#) tracking the movements of the Russian Business Network (RBN) - a group of state-sponsored hackers - called the flare-up a "full cyber siege of Georgia's cyber space" by the RBN.

Armin said Georgian internet servers were controlled by foreign attackers and internet traffic to them was being redirected to servers in Moscow.

At the time of writing, [president.gov.ge](#), [mfa.gov.ge](#) and [mod.gov.ge](#) were back online but the central government site, [government.gov.ge](#), was still down. The President's site has been moved to US servers.

"A cyber warfare campaign by Russia is seriously disrupting many Georgian websites, including that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote in a statement on its temporary blog.

The blog has allowed Georgia to spread information to mainstream media and the West, knowing it would be difficult for the hackers to target Google.

Security experts claim Georgia's websites were the subject of sustained "denial-of-service" attacks, which flood the target with visits in order to overload it and knock it offline.

Through Armin's RBN Exploit blog, Georgia warned people to use caution when surfing to its official sites, particularly those without any recent news, as they may be fraudulent.

The Shadowserver Foundation, which describes itself as a "volunteer watchdog group of security professionals" who track online hacking, said it had [witnessed multiple attacks](#) on both Georgian government and commercial websites, such as [news.ge](#), [newsgeorgia.ru](#), [tbilisiweb.info](#) and [apsny.ge](#).

"While this flurry of activity appears to coincide with recent events involving Russia and Georgia, we do not have solid information surrounding the who and the why," Shadowserver's Steven Adair said.

The President of Poland, Lech Kaczynski, weighed into the issue, saying Russia was blocking "Georgian internet portals" to supplement its "military aggression".

Kaczynski offered his own website to Georgia to aid in the "dissemination of information".

Russian nationalists were also blamed for a cyber attack on Estonia in April last year, which took out much of the country's internet infrastructure.

The attacks were sparked by the removal of a Soviet war memorial in Estonia's capital, Tallinn. Websites for the country's government departments, banks, newspapers and other commercial operators were all forced offline.

Estonia is reportedly sending cyber defence advisers from its NATO Cyber Defence Centre - established after last year's attacks in Tallinn - to Georgia to share their knowledge on dealing with cyber warfare.

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